

ISRAELS
peace with GOD
BENIAMINES

Overthrow.

A SERMON PREACHED

Before the Honourable House of

COMMONS, at their late solemn Fast,

August 31. 1642.

By *William Carter.*

Published by Order from that House.

NEHEM. 8. 10.

The joy of the Lord is your strength.

L O N D O N,

Printed for Giles Calvert, and are to be sold by Christopher
Meredith at the Signe of the Crane in Pauls Church-
yard. M.DC.XLII.

Case
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Die Mercurij, ultimo Augusti, 1642.

IT is this day Ordered by the
COMMONS House of PARLI-
AMENT, That M. *Sollicitour* and
M. *Salloway*, doe returne thanks
unto M. *Carter* for the great pains he
took at the intreaty of the House, be-
fore the Members thereof at S.
Margarets Westminster this day of
the publike Fast, and that they doe
intreat him from this House to
Print his Sermon: And it is also
Ordered and required that no man
shall presume to print this Booke or
Sermon but he whom M. *Carter* shall
assigne under his hand.

H. *Elfyng*, Cler. Parl, D. Com.

I Appoint *Giles Calvert* to Print the afore-said
Sermon.

WILL. CARTER.



TO THE
HONOURABLE HOUSE OF
COMMONS now Assembled
in PARLIAMENT.



Our commands have hardened me,
against the conscience of my poore
abilities, to offer to you my two
mites, one from the Pulpit, this
other from the Presse.

The wise God is pleased to trust
the treasure of his Gospell, in ear- ^{2 Cor. 4. 7.}
then vessels. Such glorious and sweet discoveries of
himselfe the Lord hath given us in it, that the weakest ^{2 Cor. 10.}
may by it be helpfull instruments unto the strongest. The ^{4.}
weapons of our warfare are mighty, not from our
selues, but through God, who glorifieth strength in
weaknesse. ^{2 Cor. 12.}
^{9.}

This truth of his, concerning reconciliation with him,
is one of the principall; by it the soules of men are over-
come to doe for God ('tis called justification of life, ^{Tit 2. 11,}
(Rom. 5. 8.) because the putting forth of spiritnall ^{12.}
life in us begins in that,) and God himselfe is overcome
to doe for men.

The Epistle Dedicatory.

I studied how to speake a word in season: as for a day of Fast, it is the businesse of that day, to make attonement; As for your selves, of all the preparations you can make, for that great work you have in hand, it is the chiefe. This ingageth heaven for your assistance, fits you for the worke, rayseth your affections to it, continually gives a new and fresh increase of strength; it restores the foule, which otherwise growes weake in all it's acts, by decayes of nature in the body, and the guilt of sinne upon the conscience; when sinne is pardoned our youth returnes, and is renewed like the Eagles: It will knit you all together in a mutuall and an heavenly love. The Thebans in their Armies had a band of men they called sacra cohors, which consisted of such only, who were joyn'd together in the bonds of love; these they esteem'd the prime of all their strength in battell: This is the priviledge of those who are at peace with God; they are an holy band, all knit together by that heavenly bond.

Pl. 23. 3.

Pl. 103. 5

ἱερὸς λό-
γος ἐστὶν
ἐργασίαν
καὶ ἐρωμὴν
πάντων.
Athenal. 3

Now the God of peace that brought againe from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepheard of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good worke to doe his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ. This is the prayer of

Your daily Oratour

and humble servant in Christ

WILL. CARTER.

ISRAEL'S Peace with God,
Benjamine overthrow.

JUDGES 10. 26, 27, 28.

VERS. 26. Then all the children of Israel, and all the people went up, and came unto the house of God, and wept, and sate there before the Lord, and fasted that day untill even, and offered burnt-offerings, and peace offerings before the Lord.

27. And the children of Israel inquired of the Lord, (for the Arke of the covenant of God was there in those dayes.

28. And Phinchas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, stood before it in those dayes) saying, Shall I yet againe goe out to battaile against the children of Benjamine my brother, or shall I cease? And the Lord said, goe up, for to-morrow will I deliver them into thine hand.



N this Chapter we have the History of the Warre of *Israel* against his brother *Benjamine*; The occasion of the Warre we have in the former Chapter, the sinne about the Levites Concubine; A fact so foule, as all the Congregation of God, the

B

men

men of *Israel*, held themselves obliged to see it punished. The like ingagement was acknowledged by the people, upon supposall of a sinne committed by the two Tribes and halfe, at the bankes of *Jordan*: Had they built that Altar, with intention to have used it in the worship, the people had been bound to warre against them; as we see in that they make the case to be the same, with that of *Achan*, and of *Peor*, *Josh.* 22. 17, 20.

The cause here, for which the people took up armes, was just, and their call was good, it was from God; besides, what they had, for it, of the mind of God, either by precept or example, the Lord did countenance the action by an Oracle from Heaven, *vers. 18. & 23. Shall I goe up to battell against the children of Benjamin my brother? The Lord said, goe up against them.* Yet the successe was ill. Twice was *Israel* smitten by the rebels, to the losse, well nigh, of forty thousand men. Good successe in warre depends much upon the goodnesse of the cause, but not only upon that; nor is alwayes the justice of a cause a warrant for a man to take up Armes, there must also be a lawfull call; both these are not enough to bring an happy issue; That we shall see in the Text, in which we have two things,

First, the practice of the people upon their being beat, and put to flight the second time.

Secondly, the successe of that their practice.

I. Their practice is laid downe,

I.

First in generall, they goe to God. *Then all the children of Israel, and all the people went up, and came unto the house of Gods and sate there before the Lord; When Gods people leave this world they goe to God, and*

when the world leaves them, that is, when crosses come, and the comforts of this life forsake them, they doe the like, they goe to him; Afflictions drive the wicked farther off from God, but bring his people nearer to him; Come, say they, let us returne unto the Lord our God, for he hath done, and he will heale us, he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. *Hof. 6, 1.*

Secondly in particular, in two things.

First, they labour the making of their peace with God, which all this while they had neglected, which neglect was the cause why God did not assist them. A man that would doe any thing for God, and prosper in his worke, besides that both his cause and his call must be good, himselfe must also be at peace with him. The Israelites were right in what they did, they were not right themselves that went about it, they had their Idolls, and false worship, still among them, unpented of; therefore God went not forth with their Armies. At last they set upon the making of their peace, and that they doe in three things.

First, They humble themselves with fasting and weeping. No peace with God to an unbroken heart. *God resisteth the proud, he giveth grace to the humble. If my people humble themselves (saith God, and pray &c. I will forgive their sinne and heale their land, 2 Chron. 7. 14.* *James 4. 6.*

Secondly, They goe to God for pardon, that was the designe of their burnt offerings: for this sacrifice was a type of Christ, offering up himselfe, through the eternall Spirit, unto God, that by his blood we might be purged from dead works, so the Apostle hath explained it, *Heb. 9. 14.*

Thirdly, They give up themselves in covenant with God; that was the intent of their peace-offerings; the word *peace* signifies as well a pay-offering, or thank offering, as a peace-offering: the nature of this sacrifice we have explained, *Lev. 7.* where we find it, either for thanksgiving unto God for mercies received, *v. 11.* or in case of a vow, or voluntary offering, *v. 16.* *Prov. 7. 14.* *I have peace offerings with me, this day have I paid my vows;* these two sacrifices, burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, still went together, in case the Lord was sought to in some great distress; *Judg. 14.* this people was in distress for Benjamin; after they had killed so many of that Tribe, *v. 2.* they lift up their voice and wept sore; and *v. 4.* they built an Altar, and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings. Again, *1 Chron. 21. 15.* David was in distress, because of the plague, hee offers burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, and called upon the Lord; and how often doe we find, how in their distress, they made vows to God, what they would doe if he would help them! The Apostle therefore sayes, if we would seek to God in time of trouble, this our peace-offering must not be omitted; *Phil. 4. 6.* *Be carefull for nothing, but in every thing, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, make your request known to God.* Would we know the reason why a sacrifice of thanksgiving, or of a vow to God, should be called a peace-offering, we have it in the next words of the Apostle, namely, because the fruit of it is peace; doe this, sayes he, and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds, through Christ Jesus. Well, what were the thanks this people gave to God? not only some good words, they gave

them.

themselves a living sacrifice; besides that which hath bin said, the nature of the duty now in hand implies as much; as we see in the like case of prayer and fasting, *Nehem. 9. 1, 7. 28.* We are in great distresse, and because of this, we make a sure covenant, and write it; and our Princes, Levites, and Priests, seale unto it. Thus I say they indeavour the making of their peace with God.

Rom. 12.
1,

Secondly, They sue for his advice and counsell, Shall I yet againe goe out to battell against the children of Benjamin my brother, or shall I cease? Now to have desisted, when they were advanc't so farre, and that at Gods command, were very hard; But such is the temper of a broken heart, to be content with what appears to be the mind of God, though an occasion of an heavy crosse.

2.

This suite of the people is set forth by circumstances.

1. Of place where the Arke was.
2. Of the Person by whom, *Phinehas the son of Eleazar.*

These circumstances are brought in, I suppose, chiefly to shew the time when this warre fell out; it was before the Arke was taken captive by the *Philistins*, for (says the Text) *the Arke of the covenant of God was there* (that is, at the house of God, or at the Tabernacle of the Congregation) *in those dayes*, and it was in the time that *Phinehas* stood before it; so as however this History be here placed, at the end of this Booke of *Judges*, yet was it of more antiquity. But this I shall not need to stand upon. Thus wee have the first thing in the Text, the practice of the people.

2. The second is the successe of this practice, an answer from God, in two things.

1. First a command, *goe up*, that is, to battell against *Benjamine*. From whence we may observe, *How ever warre be a bloody work, a civill warre especially, yet in some cases it is Gods command.*

2. Secondly a promise, in which

1. First the thing promised, *victory, I will give them into thine hand*. Good cause the people had to make *their peace with God*, he is the Lord of hosts who ordereth at his pleasure, what event shall be in any enterprize. *There are (saith Solomon) many devices in the heart of man, but the counsell of the Lord, that shall stand.*

Prov. 19.
21.

2. Secondly the time, *to morrow*. God makes hast to help his people now their peace was made: he was at hand before, and ready to have done it, they were not ready for the mercy; *the Lord is a God of judgement, therefore will he waite that he may be gracious to his people.* Isa. 30. 18.

Thus have we the words unfolded, and you see, we find them full of heavenly matter, each of these particulars affording something to us, by way of observation. I shall insist only upon that, which riseth from the whole of this history, and it is this,

Doct. *That the worke of God doth prosper best in such mens hands, whose sinnes are pardoned, and whose peace is made with him.*

It was not the number of the forces, thirteene to one and more could carry it; 'twas *Israels* repentance, his teares and fasting, his burnr-offerings and peace-offerings, that was the ruine of those wicked men. When *Israel* by teares and supplications first had conquer'd Heaven, the conquest of the *Benjamites*

James was easy, which before they found so much beyond their strength; 'tis true, God serves himselfe sometimes upon his enemies, and they shall doe his work, but still his businesse prospers best with such who are his friends. Therefore doe we find that when the Lord did point forth to his Prophet in a vision, *Iosuah the high Priest* as the instrument, whereby he would doe great things for his people, he sets him out as one whose finnes were pardoned; That is the scope of that phrase in the vision, *Iosua stood before the Angell of the Lord in filthy garments*, and God commands them to be taken from him; so is the phrase interpreted by God himselfe, v. 4. he said to them that stood by, take away the filthy garments from him, and unto him he said, I have caused thine iniquities to passe from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of rayment. Thus also was it with the Prophet *Isaiah*, what complaints he makes of his unfitness for the office, and imployment of a Prophet! *Woe is me* (saith he) *I am undone, because I am a man of uncleane lips*; God doth but assure him that his finnes were pardoned, and how ready is he, and forward to the worke? v. 6. one of the *Scrappims* touched his lips with a coale from the Altar; that is, he was toucht by that Spirit of grace and life which is in Christ, our Altar, whereby (as the Apostle sayes) we are made free from the Law of sinne and death, and sayes unto him, thy iniquity is taken away, and thy sinne purged, then when God cryes, whom shall I send? and who will goe for us? here am I (sayes the Prophet) send me. See what a pardon does, to fit us for the work of God; not that now he began to be a Prophet, or that now his finnes were first pardoned, but this fresh evidence of pardon, gave to him a new strength

Zach. 3. 1.

3. 5.

Isa. 6. 5. to

8.

Rom. 8. 2.

Heb. 1. 3.

30.

strength, and courage to the work. Another instance we have of this in *Saul*, and *David*. *Saul* was a man of the goodliest person, and for gifts of nature, was the likeliest of all the men of *Israel* to make a King, and such a King, as should deliver *Israel* from oppression by his enemies; he was *higher than any of the people from the shoulders upward*, 1 Sam 10.23. the testimony that *Samuell* gave of him was this, *see him whom the Lord hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people*, v. 24. He was a man of such hopes, and *Samuel* himselfe had such expectations, what God would doe for *Israel* by his hand, as we see how he mourns for *Saul* when God had cast him off. But this mans finnes were never pardoned, he never made his peace with God in all his life, and how ill the work of God succeeded in his hands! he does his work to halves. God sends him to destroy *Amalek*, (against whom he had an ancient quarrell,) *Saul spares Agag*, Exod. 17. 16. *and the fattest of the cattell*. *Israel*, in the time of his reigne, was brought to such a bondage to the *Philistines*, as that there was not found a Smith in *Israel*, and 1 Sam. 13. 6. 19. *the people hid themselves in caves, in thickets, and in rocks, and high places*; it is true, at the beginning of his reigne, something he did, but yet, if *Saul* slew his thousands, *David* his ten thousands; and what was *David*? a man but of a slight appearance in comparison, but a man after Gods own heart, one that had 1 Sam 13. 14. his finnes pardoned, and could say, *O God thou art my God*, and of Gods favour, that it was better than life Pl. 63 1. to his soule; he slayes *Goliath* with a sling and a stone, 1 Sam. 17. when *Saul* stands trembling in his tent: and how did he prosper against the enemies of God throughout his reigne! Well, this *David* breakes his peace with God,

and

and then how feeble and how weake he growes ! that sinne in the matter of *Vriah*, he confesses *broke his bones*, Ps. 51. 8. Againe at ver. 12. see what he saies, *Restore to me the joy of thy Salvation, and establish me with thy free Spirit, then will I teach transgressours thy wayes and sinners shall be converted to thee.* David was a Prophet, but he could not teach the wayes of God, untill the joy of Gods Salvation was restor'd him; *The joy of the Lord is our strength*, Nehem. 8. 10.

Now in handling this Point, however that in my Text, from whence it riseth, be an instance onely of a warre, that *Israel* under-tooke for God, yet I shall not there confine my selfe, but insift upon it in the generall, as it is a truth in any case whatever; nor shall I so desert my Text, not onely, because the truth is universall, and holds paralell in all cases, wherein we appeare for God, but also, because as the Nation of the *Iewes*, was a type of the Churches of the Gospell, so such like passages of providence and dealings with that people, have in them much of the mind of God, about the most spirituall affaires of the Churches of the New Testament, as we see the Apostle *Paul* applies that great Deliverance of the people out of *Egypt*, at the red-Sea, and in the Wildernesse, to the Church of *Corinth*, 1 Cor. 10. 1. Therefore (I say) I shall handle it, as that which holds true in any worke we undertake for God, *it prospers best with those whose peace is made with him.*

For the further clearing of it, take first, one demonstration, that it is a truth; then I shall give the Reasons, whence it comes to passe. That it is a truth appeares in this, because a man not reconciled to God,

Mat. 7. 26

Mat. 13.

20.

Hos. 14. 9.

Heb. 10.

38.

ere long, growes weary of his worke ; *The house upon the Sand*, our Saviour saies, *will fall*; and *the stonie ground*, that is, *an heart wherein there is no through worke of grace*, will bring forth fruit but for a season. Sooner or later, at least in some degree of Apostasy, a man unsound falls off from God ; *The ways of the Lord are right*, and *the Righteous walke in them*, but *the Transgressours shall fall therein* ; which is an evidence, his worke did never kindly prosper in his hands ; that is one cause of all Apostasyes, when men will doe for God, and what they doe comes off with losse and disadvantage : For instance, when a man will pray, but looses of the tenderneffe of his heart by prayer; or heares the word, and, for a season, heares with joy, yet is the worke for hearing, or ventures himselfe for God, in standing for his cause, and every time with lesse content and comfort in his venture ; in every duty driving still the Christians trade to losse ; what followes upon this ? At last he is discourag'd quite, and saith in his heart, that he shall not doe good upon the way, turns Apostate and fals away from God. Looke into mens Apostasyes, you'l find this still hath been one cause thereof ; Despaire is ever an ingredient in that sinne, and that arises partly from such like experiments. What is said of God in that he does for man, in his conversion and salvation, is true of us, in that we doe for God, *Heb. 10. 38. If any man draw backe*, sayes God, *my soule shall have no pleasure in him*. Hee speakes it of such persons, who come forward kindly in conversion, unto such a pitch, and then fall off. Now (saies the Apostle) thus it is with Christ in this particular ; A man that is, as it were, betwixt his

his hands, in fashioning and moulding to salvation, so long as he comes kindly on, in his conversion, Christ takes pleasure in him, and rejoyces over the worke of his owne hands upon his soule; but if he prove a knotty peece, that comes not forward in the worke, *resisting still the Holy Ghost, He takes no pleasure in that soule, and throwes him by; His Spirit shall not alwaies strive with man*; therefore the Apostle saies, *it is a drawing backe to perdition*, Heb. 10. 39. And thus it is with us in that we doe for God, what prospers in our hands, and comes on well and kindly, 'tis a pleasure to a man to be imploy'd about it, but if it runs crosse, and thrive not with us (as, sooner or later, is the case of every man, not reconcil'd to God, that labours in his worke) we take no pleasure in it, and cast it by. This therefore being found to be the case of such in labouring for God, that they'l runne well a while, and afterwards draw back, it is a demonstration that the worke of God succeeds not well in such mens hands.

Act. 7, 51.
Gen. 6. 3.

Now if the Question be, what is the Reason why this is so?

I answer, an account thereof wee have 2. wayes, partly from the nature of the worke, partly from the enemies that will oppose it.

From the nature of the worke, because 'tis such as must have for it a man, 1. Of *Courage*. 2. Of *Wisdome*. 3. *That aimes at God in what he does and not himselfe*.

1. The work of God requires courage in a man, much more oft times is lost for want of fortitude than of strength. The enemies of Christ are base and cowardly, their cause is such as makes their hearts to faile;

1.

a guilty conscience fills them with amazement and confusion, if any opposition comes. We know what
 Mar. 6. 20. *John* did once by *Herod*, though he was a King, he feared *John*, as poore and despicable as he was : such is the Majesty of Truth, it sets the Patrons of it, farre above the greatest in the world. Looke upon the most notorious miscarriages upon record you'll finde that this was still the cause that men would not appeare; when Christ was crucified, did not all forsake him ? Had but a few of that unconstant multitude, which but a while before had cry'd *Hosanna*, stucke close to Christ, in likelihood, they had deliver'd him ; *Pilat* was willing to release him, but not a man or woman would appeare for him. Therefore is it, that the Lord is so exceeding earnest with his people to be valiant, Deut. 20. 1. *When thou goest out to battell against thine enemies, and seest Horses and Chariots, and a people more then thou, be not afraid of them, for the Lord thy God is with thee.* And vvhat provision doth he make, ver. 8. *that all the fearefull might be sent away.* When God would choose a Company
 Judg. 7. 3. for *Gideon*, many qualifications did he looke at in his choyce, but in the first place, all the fearefull must be gone. Christ sayes, he will not owne that man, that is a coward in his cause. *Whosoever shall deny me,* sayes Christ. *before men, him will I deny before my Father which is in Heaven.* And of those vvhom Christ will cast into the *burning lake*, vvhen he shall be avenged of his enemies, (*Revel. 21. 8*) the fearefull are in the first place mentioned, even before the *Sorcerers, Murtherers and Whoremongers.* The Reason of all this is, because of that opposition the worke of God vvill alwayes meet vvith in this vvorld ;
 God

Mat. 26.
31.

Mar 8. 38.
Mat. 10.
33.

God loves this vway to try his people ; he knowes vvhhat is in their hearts, therefore hee furnisheh his peoples enemies vvith strength, that others may know it too, namely that how ever men that have no more but nature in them vvill goe farre, and doe much in a good cause, yet there is a principle in his peoples hearts, that will goe farther, such as no preferments in the world can bribe, nor any feare dishearten, such as is the same in foule vveather as in faire, that goes through good report and ill report, that baulkes no duty to be done for God; what ere it cost : This God loves to make appeare to be in his, therefore doth he exercise them with such oppositions in his vvorke. Thus vvee see the man imploy'd for him hath need of courage.

Well, let us see vvhhat pardon of our sins and peace vvith God does for a man in this. What sayes Solomon? Pro. 28. 1. *The wicked flees when none pursues him, but the righteous is bold as a Lyon*; a guilty conscience alwayes makes a coward. Esa. 33. 14. *The sinners in Syon are afraid, fearefulnesse hath surprized the Hypocrites.* As for the Righteous, behold their priviledge at such a time, in that speech of our Saviour, (Luk. 21. 25.) *There shall be distresse of Nations with perplexity, mens hearts failing them for feare, and for looking after those things, which are comming on the Earth, then lift up your heads, saith Christ, for your redemption draweth nigh.* The reason is, because a guilty man hath two mischiefes at once to grapple with, oppositions from vvithout, and vvithin the vvyrath of God upon his soule: both vvwhich put together is a burthen that vvill wound and sinke his spirit, *The spirit of a man will*

bear his infirmities, but a wounded spirit who can bear?

Prov. 18. 4. Therefore is it that the Wise-man also sayes : *A just man falleth seven times and riseth again;* vvhatsoever opposition be without, yet his heart is vvhole, his courage is unbroken; but, sayes he, a wicked man falls into mischief; that is, being not at peace vvith God, he hath not vvherewithall to stay his soule, but vvhen he sinkes he falls into despaire, and cannot raise his spirit up againe. The Heathen man could say, a man of an ill conscience, feares himselfe, he cannot give an account to his owne soule, how can he looke death in the face, the Messenger of God, the righteous Iudge? *In primis reverere te ipsum*, vvvas Pythagoras his rule. Wee reade how Charles the ninth of France, after his bloody Massacre of the Protestants, vvvas more terrible to himselfe, then ever he had beene before to others. Thus you see this is one Reason, vvhy the vvorke of God doth prosper best in such mens hands vvwhose sins are pardoned; because that peace vvith God will make a man couragious in his cause.

2. 2. The vvorke of God is such, as must have men of
 Heb 3. 13 vvvisdome in it. The enemies of God are crafty. Sin is a deceitfull thing, and Satan very subrill, besides it is no easie matter to understand his vvorke;
 1 Cor. 2. 14. *The naturall man receives not the things of God, for they are foolishnesse unto him.* Moreover, he that labours in his vvorke shall ever and anon be at a plunge,
 Zach. 4. 7. *Mountaines will rise up before Zerubbabel;* in all these cases there must be vvvisdome. The vvorke of God in this vvorld is like a Ship that sayls in a tempestuous Sea, that needes much skill to guide it right, and keepe it on! especially is vvvisdome requisite in those

vvho vvill be Saviours to a people, if that be the
 vvorke God vvould have done; our Saviour Christ
 is the vvildome of the Father, that makes him so ab-
 ble for his undertakings. In a degree it holds also
 true in you (Honourable and Worthy Senators)
 vvhom God hath called to be Saviours of this King-
 dome; the Reason's cleare, you must doe it for many
 that vvill ill requite you, ingratefull and unworthy
 persons, such as consider not your faithfulnessse nor
 travell, nay, even for such as vvill revile you, and
 reproach your actions, for base minded men that will
 doe nothing for themselves; thus doth Christ, and
 thus must you. Now vvhat vvisedome is here requi-
 site, vvhereby in the face of such discouragements in
 patience to possesse your soules? Looking beyond
 these things, and so discerning how the time vvill be
 that those very moutnes vvich now are opened a-
 gainst you, vvill speake of your renown and praise,
 how the child unborne shall blesse God for you, *And*
how these afflictions, which are but for a moment, worke
for you a farre more exceeding and eternall waite of
glory: In the meane time carrying matters so as not to
 give offence to God, nor so to lose vvith man, as to
 lose the cause; here I say is vvildome thus to pos-
 sesse your selves vvith patience; therefore the Apo-
 stle having made his exhortation, *to let patience have*
a perfect worke, addes in the next words, *If any of you*
want vvildome, let him aske of God. Wisdom alwayes
 is the mother of such a daughter. Now doe but
 consider vvhat advantage is in point of vvildome in
 a pardon and in peace vvith God; and this second Rea-
 son of the point vvill also be exceeding cleare. You see
 here *Israel having made his peace vvith him* found out

2 Cor. 4.
 17.

Jam. 1 4, 5

a *stratagem* against the *Benjamites*; vvhich before, either for vvant of courage or of prudence, or rather both, they did not use: the taking of the City by an ambush, as they did. *Solomons wise-man*, so often mention'd in his *Proverbs*, is the *holy man*, and the *wicked man* is the *foole*, not onely in point of spirituall, but even of morall vvisdome. Guilt upon the conscience, brings confusion into the soul, that brings darknesse upon the understanding. A vvise man alwayes knoweth his end and scope in any businesse; a vvicked man is not able to judge of his owne ends or aymes, *he walkes in darknesse*, sayes the Apostle, *and knoweth not whither he goes*, that is, he is not able to trace the vvayes of his owne heart, therefore vvicked men are said to be given over to an unjudicious mind, the vvord vvhich is translated a reprobate mind, signifies a mind void of Iudgement. And indeed this followeth upon the former, a spirit of feare is never sever'd from an unsound mind, 2 Tim. 1. 7. *God hath not given us the spirit of feare, but of power, of love and of a sound minde.* Prov. 2. 7, 8. *The Lord layeth up sound vvisdome for the Righteous; layes it up for him*, that is, vvhen he is in straits, vvhen as a man of a guilty conscience is confounded, at his vvits end, as vve say, then hath the righteous man such quietnesse of spirit, soundnesse and presence of mind, as hee shall have the use of solid reason for his guide; Thus *God layes up sound vvisdome for the righteous.*

3. The vvorke of God requires a man that chiefly aimes at God, and at his glory in vvhat he does, so it cannot prosper vvith selfe-seeking men, their moovne ends vvill either byas them, and turne them quite

1 Joh. 2.

2 Joh. 1. 28

vsy

Rom. 1. 28

quite out of the way, or take them off. And such are those who are not *reconciled to God and pardoned*; we see it clearly in the Prodigall, he was no sooner out with his Father, but he became his own slave, and served his own base lusts, those were the *swine* he kept, whereby to keep himself alive. And in this Parable we have the state of every man not *reconciled to God*, the reason why this is his case, is this, because man, being but a creature, must be servant unto something, he is not able to subsist alone, or to set up of his own stock, 'tis Gods prerogative alone to be independent, and not to serve; the happinesse of creatures lyes in service, the Angells themselves would be undone without it, therefore I say every man is a servant unto something; and being out with God he serves himself; self is the next in reason that will challenge it when God's deni'd it. Now this self-love, I say, will spoile the work, that such a man shall undertake for God, *Israel is an empty vine*, sayes God, *Hos. 10. 1. he brings forth fruit unto himself*; the reason is, because Gods ends and his will seldom or never stand together, they runne counter, and one destroyes the other. This now is a third reason of the point, The work of God will prosper best with such whose peace is made with him, because they only are the men, that make the glory of the Lord their scope in what they doe; the reason is, because God is the portion of that man whose sins are pardoned; he can say, that God whom I serve is my God, my Father, my hope and joy, my glory, my salvation; he can say, that God is so his own as that his best being is in God, so as that which he does for himself, without relation unto him, he loses quite, and what

D

he

Mt. 16.
25.

he doth for God, or gives to him is his own still, as our Saviour sayes, *He that saves his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake the same shall find it.* Therefore does he aime at God in all his ways, and therefore doth his work thrive best with him.

Thus have we an account of the Reason of this point from the nature of the work.

2.

Secondly, We shall see as much from the enemies that will oppose it, and they are principally two.

1. Satan.

2. The sin of a mans own heart.

1.
Ephes. 6.
12.

Who ever is imploy'd for God, must wraastle not only against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darknesse of this world, against spirituall wickednesses in high places, that is, he shall have all the power of all the Divells in Hell against him. When Iosua was poynted to, as an instrument for God, Satan was said to stand at his right hand to resist him, *Zach. 3. 1. we had come to you even once and again* (sayes the Apostle) *but Satan hindred us.*

1. Thef. 2.
18.

We may say the like, such and such things had been done for God by us, such and such a blessing had we enjoyd, even once and again, but Satan hindred us. It is his nature to be doing mischief against God, and against his work, in the hands of his people; therefore when he is cast out of mens hearts, and so cut short in that regard, he is said to be *thrown down like lightning from Heaven*, the hearts of men is that heaven from whence he is expel'd, and because it is against the nature of lightning to go downward, is he in his fall compar'd to that: therefore also when he was cast out, he said himself *he was tormented*; and our Saviour saith, *that being dispossesst he walks in dry places,*

Luk. 10.
18.

Mat. 8. 29
Mat. 12.
43.

seeking

seeking rest and finding none, not but that the dry and wet are both alike to him, but it is a phrase fitted to our apprehensions, signifying that discontent, and restless state wherein he is at such a time; so the same is used, *Ier. 17. 5. Cursed be he that maketh flesh his arme, he shall inherit the parched places of the wildernesse*; that is, he shall have no content or satisfaction: thus it is with Satan, therefore it followeth, *seeking rest and finding none*. Therefore I say, if any man be set on work for God, all the power and subtilty of Satan and his wicked instruments are set against him.

Secondly, He that is employed for God shall have the sin of his own heart against him: sin hath reason for it, because the works of God are 'irs destruction; where his work prospers, woe to sin, it fades and dyes. The work of God is the advancement of Jesus Christ in the world, and is not he the bane of sinne. *Christ is the light of the world*, sin is the darknesse of it; the flesh therefore fights and strives for life against him, because as he prevailes that is destroy'd. Therefore is it said, that when he comes into his Temple, men will not abide his comming, *Mal. 3. 2.* no, even those that seek it and delight in Christ, so farre as sinfull flesh prevailes, will not abide it, *v. 1. The Lord whom yee seek, shall come to his Temple*, that is, to his Church, and to the souls of men in his Gospell, for they are his Temples also, *even the messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in, but who can abide the day of his comming?* be it his comming into a Kingdom, or into a Congregation, or into our own souls, we must say as the Apostle sayes in a like case, *I delight in the law of God after the inward man, but I see another law in my members warring against the law of my* Rom. 7. 22.

Rev. 22.
17.

mind; so wee delight in Christ after the inward man, *the spirit indeed is willing, the spirit and the bride say come, yea, come Lord Iesus, come quickly*; but the flesh, or that sinfull nature, the remainders whereof are in the best, will not indure the thing. Even those that seek for reformation, will be shie of entertaining Christ, afraid of being reformed too farre; thence are those pretences that are made against it: that carriage of the Church to Christ, *Cant. 5. 2.* seems to be ours at this day. *He knocks at the dore, and cryes, open to me my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled, for my head is filled with dew, &c.* No, *she had put off her coat and how should she put it on? she had washed her feet and how should she defile them?* so say we, how shall we doe this? and how shall we doe that? and what distractions will this reformation cause? &c. Now whence is this? is it indeed a truth, that reformation of Religion will endamage common wealths? was it ever known that strictnesse in Gods service, the most powerfull preaching of the word, the truth and purity of worship ever hurt a nation? what saith Christ? *By me Kings raigne, and Princes degree justice*: No, no beloved, these are but excuses, arising from the sin of the hearts of men; what ever you would doe for God, ye shall be sure to have all the strength of the sin of your own hearts against you in it.

Pro. 8. 15.

You will say, suppose all this be true, that sin and Satan will oppose, yet how is this a reason of the point in hand? I answer yes, because in both these cases, such persons only who are *pardoned and reconciled to God*, are able to withstand this opposition.

First for *Satan*, 'tis not every man can deale with him; ther's no resisting him without an holy heart; there is no getting that without a *pardon*; the selfe same faith that justifies the person, *purifies the heart*, Aa. 15. 9. and makes it holy; therefore *the grace of Christ*, is said to *reigne through righteousness unto life*, Rom. 5. 21. Where there is no righteousness, that is, no pardon, the grace of Christ beares no sway in that soule; and then that man who still is in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity, however for the present he may in a manner, be ingag'd for God, what ever is that way pretended, hee will be found at last to be of Satans party; and though he goe exceeding farre in a good cause, he'l not be through in the work, and when it comes up to the main and principall, he'l faile, and that's as much as Satan wishes or desires; therefore is he said to stand at *Iosuahs* right hand to resist him, though no doubt he wrought with both hands, because his opposition principally lyes against the main and principall of the work, he passes not if you heare Sermons, so you come not neare to God in hearing, which is the main thing in the duty; or if ye pray, and draw not near to God in prayer; or if the Kingdome be reformed, so Religion may be still corrupt, he passes not so much; now I say, when once ye come unto the main in any kind, that man will faile you there. *The Prince of this world commeth* (says Christ) *and he hath nothing in me*, Joh. 14. 30. If a man be unregenerate, and hath no hold upon the covenant of grace, Satan then hath something in him, nay all that's in him, is his own, and what ever the mans design is now, Satan knows the man is his, and that in time it will be

Aa. 8. 23.

seen, yea that such a man shall doe him better service than another can, and so much the more, by how much he seemed at the first, to be against him. We see what use the Divell makes of mens apostasies, whereby men sin away their consciences, the tenderneffe of their hearts, the goodnesse of their natures, blemishing themselves in the eyes of God and men, till they grow desperate in sin and all perfidiousnesse, losing that very ingenuity which once they had. And besides all this, through their experience of the wayes of God, becomming skillfull to doe mischief more than any, as we reade of *Julian* the apostate, how he did more hurt to the Church of God, then all the persecuting Emperours that were before him. And there is no way for a preventing this, *but by building upon the rock; the house built upon the sand will surely fall, and the fall thereof is great. Let a man get into Christ, get pardon, get peace with God, and as for Satan, he shall have him, in some measure, at a distance, as our Saviour had, when hee said that hee had nothing in him, or otherwise he'l get into his heart, and so insinuate himself, and sway him by his lusts insensibly, untill he overthrowes him quite, and he repent of what he did for God.*

Mat 7. 24.

2. Secondly, As for sin, ther's no way to destroy it but by *a pardon, the strength of sin is the law*, that is, so long as the guilt of sin, and so the curse of the law, hath hold upon the soul, the soul is weak, and sin is strong. Therefore the Apostle sayes, *Heb. 9. 14. that the blood of Christ doth purge us from dead works, to serve the living God.* So long as God is look't upon as one not reconciled, what heart can any man

1 Cor. 15.
5, 6.

man have to his service? what man will suffer, or will venture any thing for one, whom he accounts his enemy? the secret despaire of his acceptance, or of ever doing good upon'r, will lay him naked to the power of the sin of his own heart, to keep him off, and to ingage him quite the other way: It is a pardon that destroys our sins, *Titus 2.12. The grace of God which bringeth salvation appearing, teacheth us to deny ungodlineſſe and worldly luſts, and to live ſoberly, righteouſly and godly in this preſent world.*

Thus have I finiſhed the Reasons of the Point, and ſo the clearing of it: now what remaines but that by way *Uſe 1.* of Application, you be exhorted to the thing? The *cauſe* wherein you are ingaged is juſt, your *call* to this engagement is as cleare, take heed the third thing be not wanting, *pardon of your ſinnes and peace with God.* Thinke upon the point that hath bene opened. God hath put into your hands, a *worke of his*, the greateſt that hath been on foot for God in theſe Iſlands, for many hundred yeares, the ſafety, peace and welfare of the Kingdome, I may ſay the three Kingdomes, nay in a great degree of all the Kingdomes of the world, wherein the true Religion is profeſt, and that not onely in reſpect of temporall things, but even of ſuch as have an influence into eternity, the true Religion, the Goſpell of our Salvation, God himſelfe; take away Religion and the Goſpell, and our God is gone, *2 Chron. 15.3. Iſrael was without the true God, when he was without a teaching Prieſt, and without the Law.* God hath call'd you to the purging of the Land of thoſe Locuſts and Caterpillars, I meane the *Romiſh* factours.

Joel 1.9. ours now amongst us, that would not have left so much as a meat-offering for our God; I may call them Locusts, the Scripture puts that name upon them; In the booke of Joel there is a Prophecie of a *Northerne Army*, that should cause a Day of darkenesse and gloominesse, of clouds and of thicke darknesse, and that the Land which was as Eden before should be as the wildernesse behind it; This Army we see was a multitude of Locusts, and such like things, Joel 2.25. *I will restore to you the yeares that the Locust hath eaten, the Canker-worme, the Caterpillar and the Palmer worme, my great Army which I sent among you*: This was verified in the Letter to the Jewes, the fruits of their Land were for a season spoyl'd by such an Army, but under the type of Locusts, it is a Prophecie of the mischief done to the whole world, especially to *Europe*, by Popish vermine, as wee see, *Revel. 9.* where wee have the selfe same *Locusts* with the same descriptions as they are set forth in *Joel*, compare the places and you'l say they are the same, which by Interpreters are applyed to the *Saracens* in the East, and to the Monkes and Fryars, and whole Popish Hierarchy, in these Western Kingdoms: it is true, the time of thei chiefe power is past, as it is said, *Their power should continue for such a time*; yet multitudes we have amongst us still, and the designe is that they may againe prevaile, untill there be not left so much as a meat-offering for God, 'tis not long since we had experience how they grew upon us, so as what the Palmer-worme left, the Locust eat, and what the Locust left, the Canker-worme eat, and what the Canker-worme left, the

Ca.

Caterpillar eate; And how slender was the *meate-offering* left for God, when as so many burning and shining lights were quite put out, such a famine of the word in most places of the Kingdom, and such bondage layd upon mens souls? This work I say the Lord hath call'd you to, the cleansing of the land from these, and blessed be his Name, who rayseth up your hearts to undertake it; *The blessing of the G O D of Heaven rest on you, your Families and Children unto all Posteritie.* Well, would you prosper in this work? then say not, it's enough that both your *cause* and *call* is good, and thus and thus you are in *strength*; faile not to *make your peace with God* this day; take heed of *Israels* case against the *Benjamites*. Me thinks I heare this sad example of Gods dealing with his people, speaking to you as the voice of God in *Joel*, Turne ye, even to me, with all your hearts; with fasting, with weeping and with mourning, and rend your hearts and not your garments, and turne unto the Lord your God, for he is gracious, and mercifull, slow to anger, and of great kindnesse, and repenteth of the evill; Who knowes if he will returne and repent, and leave a blessing behind him, even a *meate-offering* and a *drink-offering* to the Lord your God? I may say the same to you, if you but doe the worke indeed that now you come about, who knowes what God may doe? What blessing hee may give to your proceedings? what ruine he may bring upon your enemies? he'l put all your *teares* into his bottle, and they shall doe more against the rebels, then so many thousand bullets from the Cannon. Or otherwise, who knows what God may doe against you? if you neglect the making of your peace with him this day,

Joel 2.12.

Ps. 56.8.

E

alas

Ioh. 7. 9.

Isa. 49. 4.

alas it may soon cost many thousand men their lives, and for a season, it may lose the cause; doth it not make your hearts to bleed, the very thought of this? *what will those Egyptians say? what blasphemies will they belch forth? and what shall the Lord our God doe for his great Name?* much cost and care and travell hath been spent in making up of strength, and it is well there hath, God will reward you for it a thousand fold; should your indeavours prove abortive, God lookes upon them as an acceptable service to him; as wee find it, *Cant. 5. 2, 5, 6.* when *Christ had knockt, and cry'd unto his spouse, to open and to let him in, and shee neglected, afterwards when shee arose and opened the dore, shee could not find him, Christ had withdrawn himselfe, (v. 6.)* yet those indeavours of the spouse were very pleasing unto Christ, and full of comfort to her selfe; *I rose up (saith she) to open to my beloved, and my hands dropped with myrrhe, and my fingers with sweete smelling myrrhe, upon the handles of the locke:* If God should thus withdraw himselfe from us, and for a season dash our hopes, it would be just, for our delayes; but your indeavours, with such zeale and forwardnesse, to let in Christ amongst us, will be very sweet to Christ, and sweet to you; *your hands drop myrrhe, and your fingers sweet smelling myrrhe upon the handles of the locke; Though England be not saved, yet shall you be glorious in the eyes of the Lord; your judgement is with the Lord, and your reward with your God.* Therefore I say, this is well, this should be done, but leave not the maine undone, the making of your peace with God; Oh take some care and paines about that worke this day; that left undone by you, may possibly

possibly undoe us all; thinke upon the *Israelites* condition; God is resolv'd upon it, hee will have the *Locusts* purg'd the land, I meane, so as they shall not hurt his people; as he resolved here, how *Benjamin* should smart for what he did; now what was *Israels* case? had they made *their peace with God* at first, hee might have trusted them in doing of that work, without delayes; and out of love and zeale to God, they had done that which afterwards, from passion and desire of revenge, in some respect they over did: which peace when they neglected, God was put upon it, to let *Israel* be beaten, that so the people being thus incensed, might doe full execution upon *Benjamin* their brother. Thus if you make your peace with God this day, hee then may trust you in this worke, so as you may prevaile at first, without the spilling of much blood; if not, then least it should be done to halves, God will be put upon some such device, whereby to make you thorow in his worke, and how sad and heavy that may prove who knows? Moreover, doe ye not consider how God deales with people many times, according as their carriage is upon such dayes as these? see what hee said to *Israel* once upon a like occasion, *Exodus* 33. 5. *put off thine ornaments* (sayes God,) that is, humble your selves by fasting and prayer, *that I may know what to doe to thee*; he speakes it after the manner of man, as if the Lord were at a stand in point of executing judgement, till he saw their carriage in that duty; and who knowes but God may be at such a stand with us, and that his sentence shall goe forth against, or for us, as your carriage is this very day, *in learning*

E 2 from

from your evill wayes, and making of your peace?

Now if it be demanded, what is to be done? the *Israelites* example is before us, let that be your patterne.

1. They humble themselves.
2. They flee to Christ for pardon.
3. They give up themselves in covenant with God.

I.

2 Chron
7.14.

The first thing therefore is *humiliation*, and you must be active in your own abasements; *If my people humble themselves, &c.* (sayes God) *I will forgive their sinne and heale their Land*; Now be perswaded therefore, and set all your strength on worke, to lay your selves low before the Lord this day; be not satisfied with out-fides, with shadowes or with ceremonies of repentance; *Israel* did not only fast, but weepe, and so must you; *Turne to me* (saith God) *with fasting and with weeping and with mourning*; and for this purpose, call up to remembrance all your sins, make them to appeare before you both in their number and their greatnesse, and make swords and spears of them, to wound your hearts; call to mind your sins of youth, of elder years, of all sorts, and take to your selvs such words, in your confessions, such thoughts and meditations, as may cause your soules, now in the presence of your God, to melt and bleed; I will not name particulars, it would be too long, I need not; I will only name some few considerations in the generall, which if the Lord shall thoroughly set home, and cause to take impression; though they are but two or three, like *Jonathan* and his Armour-bearer midst an army of corruptions and finnes, yet many more things of the like importance,

towards

towards this humbling of our selves will come in also, and doe their part upon our soules.

Consider therefore sinne,

1. In the Root.
2. In the Fruit.
3. In the Cure.
4. In the Object against whom it is committed.

I.

1. Consider it in the Root, and so we find it is our nature ; we brought it with us when we came into the world, *Borne in sinne, conceived in iniquity*, Ps. 51. If any thing will breake our hearts the thought of this will doe it, this originall corruption of our natures ; *David* when he set himselfe to humble his soule, in that his penitentiall Psalmes, hee brings in many things whereby to doe it, as that his sinne was against his God, *Against thee*, sayes hee, *have I sinned*, against his knowledge, even that *hidden wisdom*, which the Lord had given him, but in a speciall manner doth hee mention his Originall corruption, that he brings in with an *Ecce*, *Behold* (sayes he) *I was shapen in iniquity, and in sinne did my mother conceive me*. And the Apostle *Paul* what bitter moane he makes for this ! hee suffered great afflictions in his time. *In stripes above measure, in prisons frequent, in deaths oft* : much more hee sayes, but never doth hee so complaine as at the mention of Originall sinne, *Rom.* 7.24. having first discoursed how hee found a Law, that when he would doe well evill was present with him, and a law in his members warring against the Law of his mind, and bringing him into captivity to the law of sinne, See how he cries out, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver mee from the bodie of this death?*

Ps. 51.

2 Cor 12.
23, 24, 25.

And there is reason for it, why the thought of this should wound so deepe, a three-fold mischief comes upon it, that our natures are thus sinnefull and corrupt.

1. It makes our persons odious and loathsome unto God; that is it which makes a Toade a loathsome thing, because poyson is the nature of a Toade; poyson in a Dogge makes him an object of our pittie, because 'tis his diseale; so also sinne in Gods people is their disease, therefore God pitties them the more, because of sinne, Psal. 103 13. *As a Father pittieth his children, so the Lord pittieth them that feare him*; but where sinne is nature to a man (which is the case of all men unregenerate) there is no Toad or Serpent so odious in the eye of man as such a man is in the eyes of God; and this is every mans condition, as he comes into the world (as the Prophet saies) no eye pitties us, but *wee are* throwne out into the open field, to the loathing of our persons in the day that we are borne: We are not objects of compassion, but of detestation, thinke upon it well, and let it humble us; is this a small thing in our eyes, that we by nature are a lumpe of filthinesse, and that the God of Heaven and Earth, the righteous Iudge, abhors our persons?

Secondly, sinne being nature to us, this also followes that it works exceeding powerfully in us, so as, we are the slaves of sinne, *it leades us captive*; what workes by nature, workes with power; therefore is it said that *we are captivated to the Law of sinne*, that is, to the naturall working of it in us, and that we find a Law, that *when we would doe well, evil is present with us*, that is vve find an irresistable course of nature in

Rom. 7. 1.
v. 23.

us that way tending. The courses of nature, in Scripture are call'd a Law; the naturall motions of the heavenly bodies, are called *Ordinances of Heaven*, Ier. 31. 36. The nature of every creature is the Law of it's creation, therefore the new nature is expressed by that phrase, *The Law of God vwritten upon the heart*, Ier. 31. 33. and it is called, *the Law of the Spirit of life, which is in Christ*, Rom. 8. 2. So as this is our misery, by nature we can as well forbear to eate and and drinke, or any duty that we owe to nature, as forbear to sinne; shall not the thought of this abase and humble us? What more unworthy of a man than slavery? No slavery to that of sinne; it sets us to the basest drudgery in the vworld; it keepes us alwayes at it, and it gives us nothing for our paines; *What fruit had you in these things whereof yee are now ashamed?* It puts us to an endlesse toyle, about a base imployment, and the wages that it gives is shame and death.

Rom. 6. 21

Thirdly, since it is our nature, albeit the misery be such it brings upon us, farre beyond vwhat we are able to expresse, yet we by nature are secure and feel no burthen; *nature is no burthen*: Wee may stand amaz'd to see how men indued with admirable gifts of reason, able for to judge of matters in the world, when they have heard how sinne vvill utterly destroy them, soules and bodies, how it vvill be bitternesse at last, and sinke them into hell, yet can goe on in vvickednes vvithout remorse or trouble, nay can give up themselves to such notorious vvayes of sinne, as they can see apparantly vvill ruine bodies and estates, without an aking conscience, I say vve may be well amaz'd at this, but here is the reason, sinne

is.

is our *nature*, and vvhhat ever nature gives us is no burthen to us ; of all mischiefes, is not this one of the greatest to be most miserable and not to feele it ? this keepees a man in that his misery, all the meanes of grace are fruitlesse by it to his soule, and that which made our Saviour bleed upon the Crosse, and brought him to his agony and sweat of blood, cannot obtaine a reare from us, but is despis'd and sleighted in our hearts ; and thus it's vvith us all, so farre as vvee are unregenerate and sinne prevailes. O let the thought of this, at least in this our day of Fast, doe something towards the humbling of our selves before the Lord!

2. Consider sinne in it's effects and Fruits, it threw
 Job 38. 7. the Angels out of Heaven, *Angels of light they were,*
 Jude v. 7. sinne entring once upon them made them heapes of *e-*
verlasting darkenesse and confusion, as for man it cast
 him out of *Paradise*, stript him of his beauty, bereav'd
 him of the right use of his reason, and *fills his heart*
 Eccl 9. 3. *with madnesse whilst he lives ; the wisdom of God is*
 1 Cor. 2. 7. *foolishnesse unto him :* it destroyes the tendernesse of
 14 his heart, and by degrees extinguissheth *his naturall*
 Heb. 3. 12 *affection*, and eats out all good nature in him ; it
 Ro. 1. 31 *layes him for ever naked to the wrath and curse of*
 Ioh. 3. 36. God, and sinkes him downe to hell ; that which is
 worst of all, it makes a man despise a pardon and
 to trample *under foot the sonne of God, how oft would*
I have gathered you (saith Christ) *as an hen ga-*
thereth her chickens under her wings and ye would not.
 Who would nourish such a viper in his bosome ?
 this do we; but shall it not afflict our soules, whilst we
 consider how'tis with us, and what miseries we have
 brought upon our selves thereby ? if all this will not
 make

make our hearts relent, let us a little turne our thoughts upon the temporall afflictions that it brings, there we have an object of affinity with sense, which is a great advantage unto teares; Looke upon the *miseries of Ireland*, the blood which there is spilt, by cruell, blood-thirsty and deceitfull men; the dolefull miseries we feare in this our Land, from warre; me thinks I heare the little children, the infants now unborne, to call for teares this day from parents, trying if possibly the Lord will be intreated by us, and such woe and misery may be prevented; but what ever is already, or hereafter comes upon us in that kind, should it be (which God forbid) the ruine of our Cities, destruction of the people, corruption of Religion, losse of all that's dearest to us, and the overthrow of Kingdomes, all is the fruit of sinne. Looke upon it therefore in the miseries and desolations it has caus'd in all the world, and let it so provoke your soules to mourne before the Lord this day.

3. Let sinne also be considered in the cure, *The precious blood of Christ*, that surely will make our hearts to yeeld: the blood of *Abel* cry'd against the wicked *Cain*, much more the blood of Christ against our sinnes; such is the vilenesse of it, as no other sacrifice but Christ could pacifie the wrath of God; all the creatures in the world, Angells and men, could not make up the price of mans redemption, *Psal. 49. 7, 8. None of them can by any meanes redeeme his brother, nor give unto God a ransom for him, for the redemption of the soule is precious, but, was not the holy life of Christ enough? No, he must dye, and it must be a cursed death, nor will his body's*

3.

Rom. 5. 9.

10.

Gal. 3. 13.

Mat. 26,
38.

1 Joh. 3.
16.

death suffice, his soule must dye. Isa. 53. 10. His soule was made an offering for sinne, and Ps. 12. He poured out his soule to death; nor had all this been sufficient, had not the blood of Christ been the blood of God, Act. 20. 28. God purchased his Church by his own blood. Well, have our sinnes cost Christ his blood, and shall they not cost us some teares? think upon him how he bled upon the crosse, and how he hung while all was finished, and for shame let it doe something towards the breaking of our hearts. It will wound the deeper, if

Act. 17. 28

Mich. 7. 15

Ezech. 33.

11.

Ezech. 18.

31.

Jer. 13. 17.

Luk. 15.

10.

Luk. 19.

41.

4. In the last place, we consider *who it is we have offended*, even this Christ who thus hath shed his blood upon the crosse for sinners, that God *in whom we live and move*, that makes our lives so sweet by many mercies, that pardoneth iniquity, and reteineth not his anger for ever, because he delights in mercy, that calls upon you with such tender bowells of affection, *why will ye dye? and will ye not be made cleane? when shall it once be?* that when you are converted unto life rejoiceth, when you stand it out by unbelcefe, weeps over you: (To you who are his people I may say,) that God who hath *ingag'd himselfe to love you*, and to be your *portion, husband, friend and father*. Well, shall not all this love of his make us relent, and mourne for sinne, whereby we have abus'd him? shall he weep for us, and we not for our selves? his Spirit grieveth when his people sinne, what hearts have we that are so little moov'd for what we doe against him! Thus have we dispatcht the first thing in the making of our peace, this humbling of our selves. I have stood the longer upon this, because it is a principall and main part of the duty of this day, and that indeed,

on which the rest will much depend. You heard in opening of the Text, there is no peace to an unbroke-
 ken heart; therefore we find it in the first place called
 for by God in dayes of Fast, and the first thing put in
 practice here by Israel his people. Lev. 23. 27.
2 Chro. 7.
14.

The second is, *our fleeing unto Christ for pardon*, let
 this also be a part of this dayes worke. Are we sen-
 sible in any measure of the misery of sinne, and
 weight of Gods eternall wrath? let us then stirre up
 our selves to take hold of his mercy which he freely
 offers; let every one of us thus reason with himselfe,
 as once the Eunuch said to Philip, *loe here is water,*
what hinders me to be baptized? so let us say, *see, here*
is a Christ, a Saviour, a pardon offered, why should not
I beleve? a fountaine for sinne and for uncleannesse,
what hinders me from stepping in? had he comma-
ded me some great thing to be done, for life eternall,
should I not have done it? how much rather when hee
saith, wash and be cleane, believe and be saved? and
why should I deferre a work of such importance,
that may now be done more easily than ever, should
I live a thousand yeares, since every day without
repentance addes something to the hardnesse of my
heart; and why doe I neglect eternity, and dote up-
on these transitory things below? when Jesus Christ
hath shed his blood for pardon, why doe I refuse to
sue it out? thus let us plead, and overcome our selves,
and runne to Christ for mercy and forgivenesse: nor
doe I speake this only unto such who are yet
strangers to the life of God, but even to all. The
burnt-offering was the daily sacrifice, morning and
evening it was renew'd; and it is the businesse
of our morning and evening prayer, to renew our
Jcr. 31. 32.
33.
Pl. 89. 33.
34.
Pl. 16. 5.
Eph. 3. 32.
Joh. 15.
15.
Isa. 9. 6.
Aa. 8. 36.
Zach. 13. 1.
2 King. 5.
13.
Num. 28.

peace from time to time with God; repentance is the constant work of every believer, especially it must be done upon a day of fast.

3. Thirdly, give up your selves in *Covenant* with God, that is the *peace offering* or *thank offering* he expects this day, even your selves given up to him a *living sacrifice*, your members as instruments of righteousness to God, to be possessed by his Spirit, to be govern'd by his will; give up your hearts into his hands, and let him worke his will upon them, let him bring what light he please into your understandings, let him kindle what affections he desires in your hearts, let godly sorrow have a perfect worke, and let him bring into your soules, the strongest consolations of his Spirit, doe not put them by, however heretofore you have neglected this salvation, yet now betake your selves to Christ, and venture life and soule, and all upon his mercy, say, *if we perish we perish*, Jesus Christ shall be our stay, his service our employment, there we will set up our rest for ever, we will be his servants, he shall be our God. Thus in these three things, we see what must be done in making of our peace, oh that the Lord would now perswade your hearts to doe it! You especially that never tasted of the sweetness of a pardon; God is about to doe great things for the Kingdom, yea for the whole world; it is a time of bounty with him, put you in for mercy for your soules. And why should any heart refuse? what is the cause? doe we doubt his willingness to pardon? he is more ready to embrace than we to come. Have you not consider'd what complaints he made about his casting off an unrepenting, apostatizing people? *Hos. 11. 8. How shall I give thee*

Rom. 12. 1

Rom. 6.

13.

thee up O Ephraim (sayes God?) how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? that is, as the Cities which the Lord destroy'd with Sodom and Gomorrha: My heart is turn'd within me, my repentings are kindled together, he sayes as much of you that stand demurring, and pretending, yeelding to the secret desperate misgivings of an unbeleeving heart; whilst you cry out, O how shall God accept of us? he cries as fast, how shall I cast off such a people, such a soule? doth he not intreat you to be reconcil'd? what can you desire more? 2 Cor. 5. 20. We are Ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christs stead, be ye reconciled to God. Doe ye thinke ther's no contentment in the wayes of God, and you must live a sad uncomfortable life? like those in Malachy, that say, It is in vaine to serve the Lord, and what profit is it? Is this the matter? then what think you of all those glorious things the Scripture speakes of, joy unspeakable and full of glory; that which neither eye hath seene, nor eare heard, nor hath entered into mans heart to conceive, what God hath prepared for them that love him, and reveales unto his people by his Spirit? what thinke you of Christ? did he dye to delude his people with a phansy? no, they know his flesh is meate indeed, and his blood drinke indeed. Aske among the Saints, if ever any of his servants yet, repented him of his condition or employment; they'l tell you, that the comforts which they have in Christ, are more worth than a world of sensuall delights. 'Tis true some prove Apostates, They went out from us, but they were not of us (sayes the Apostle Iohn,) if they had bin of us, they had no doubt continued with us. Doe but try once

Mal. 3. 14.

1 Pet. 1. 8.

1 Cor. 2.

9, 10.

Joh. 6. 55.

1 Joh. 2.

19.

Pl. 34. 8.
Prov. 20.
14.

Pro. 3. 17.
Pl. 19. 10.

Rom. 7.
31.

2 Cor. 10.

4.

Rom. 8.

26.

Pl. 5. 7. 2.

Rom 8. 1.

if it be not thus, tast and see, as the Psalmist sayes, that the Lord is good: You are like to *Solomons* buyer, it is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer, but when he is gone his way he boasterh; so let what can be said in praise of Christ, he is but low in your esteeme, till you have made your covenant with Christ, and then you boast and say, you could not have thought that Christ had been so good, and his wayes so sweet as now you find them; then you'l say that all *his wayes* are pleasant, and his commandements sweeter then the hony and the hony comb. Be perswaded therfore beloved, and set upon this work this day, 'tis true, the heart will hold off, no other is to be expected, else we need not so to strive to enter in at the straight gate; the Apostle Paul sayes of himselfe, that when he would doe well, evill was present with him; it is the case of all the Saints of God; you heard before, the sinne of our own hearts will certainly oppose, in any thing we doe for God: Set therfore to the work, and drive along the heart with violence; say not, you shall ne're doe good upon't, because you find your selves so listlesse and so backward, make once your peace with God, this work shall also prosper in your hands, even the destruction of your sinnes, and cleansing of your hearts from wickednesse; God shall disarme that wicked and malignant party in your soules; the strong holds of sinne shall fall before the weapons of our warfare, they shall be mighty through him, to overthrow all carnall reasonings, and to bring into captivity every thought, to the obedience of Christ, he'l help your infirmities, he'l teach you how to pray, and what to pray for, he'l performe all things for you, he'l dwell in your hearts, and the spirit of life which is in Christ, shall make you

you free from the law of sinne and death. Oh that you did Luk. 19.
but knew, even you, who are the greatest strangers 42.
unto God, that live without him in the world, at
least in this your day, though you have despis'd his
mercies many yeares, and would not be reformed,
the things which belong unto your peace, how ready
Christ is to receive you, how sweet his embraces
are, how helpfull to you in his service. And me
thinks in case you should forget your own soule, your
love unto your country, your desire of a good suc-
cesse of that great work you have in hand, should even
ingage you not to rest untill ye find your sinnes are
pardoned, and Christ is yours; this gives increase of
fortitude and wisdom, it makes you to be imploid
for God, fit to encounter Satan and his troopes, and
to resist the sinne of your own hearts; that will be-
tray you, and the cause, if it be suffer'd; but whenas
together with so great a blessing, the salvation of your
soule, and life eternall is compris'd, what heart would
not be gain'd by such an argument? and who knows
but some of you the Lord hath thus ingaged in his
worke, that so by being thus, as it were, constrain'd
to seeke him, you may be brought to his acquaintance,
and an happy closing with him to eternall blisse and
glory; otherwise, suppose you have the day, yet, if
what hath bin said will not prevaile, and you neglect
your peace with God, alas, when you shall stand before
the righteous Judge of all, how sadly will the soule
complaine? woe is me will that cry out, such pains
and care was taken for my country, my estate, my
family, but none at all for me, such hazzards did I
runne, such noble acts I did, such honour and re-
nown I got, but now I see I perish, and must for
ever

ever lye in hell. O what pittie is it, such as doe such things for God should not be saved! *what shall it profit a man if he gaines the whole world and lose his own soule?*

Mar. 8. 36.

And let me adde yet one thing more, either make your peace with God this day, or else this worke which here you are about, will no way prosper with you; this your coming here together, will not be *for the better but the worse*; by such fasting and praying, you shall lose much of the tenderneſſe of your hearts, and ſet your ſelves at greater diſtance from repentance: You heard before what God ſayes by his Prophet; *The wayes of the Lord are right, and the righteous ſhall walke in them*, that is, they ſhall goe on and prosper, they ſhall not be the worſe for prayer, nor *hearing of the word*, nor any duty; *but the transgreſſours ſhall fall therein*. The good Lord deliver us from ſuch a doome: I will ſtay no longer in this exhortation, the Lord perſwade your hearts to liſten to it!

Hof. 14. 9.

Vſe 2.

Is it ſo, *that the work of God doth prosper beſt in thoſe mens hands, whoſe peace is made with him?* then having made your peace, take heed that in your doing of his worke it be not broken. It is true, that ordinarily what care you take in ſeeking to be reconcil'd, you'll take to keep it being gotten, becauſe thereby your ſtrength and reſolution will increaſe, the having of a pardon, teacheth us to prize it; therefore I ſaid before, that ſuch the Lord may truſt in doing of his worke; but yet becauſe of humane frailty, ſince there is *ſleſh* as well as *ſpirit* in the beſt, there is alſo place for this adviſe, beware that what ye doe for God, ye doe it ſo as you offend him not in doing of it.

Three wayes especially that may be done,

1. It will offend him much, if you (especially in matters of Religion) take up things on trust from men, and shall not search into the truth your selves, and labour by your own light to discern the mind of God. Call no man your *Father* upon earth (saith Christ,) *Mat. 23. 9.* not but that our parents must be honoured; our Saviour meanes not them, it's meant in matters of faith, that no man should impose upon us by his own, or any mans authority; therefore it follows, neither be ye called *Master*, that is, expect it not from others, that they should take up things on trust from you: our Saviour addes the reason, *v. 9.* for, sayes he, ye have one *Master* even Christ, that is, his word must be the bottome of your faith, and all ye are brethren, that is, in point of being *Masters* over one an others faith and conscience, ye are all equall and alike. Three words our Saviour there useth in this matter, *Rabbi*, that is, *Master*, *Joh. 1. 38.* *Father*, *Doctor* or *Leader*, in which he compriseth all such personall respects which might carry it with men, and he forbids them all; not that these titles are unlawfull, but not lawfull in this way, namely, by any personall respects what ever, either of learning in the first, or of antiquity in the second, or of example in the third, to put things upon men in doctrine or in practice; our Saviour determines that question, how far the doctrine of the Pharisees should be regarded, you see he is upon't, *v. 1.* & he gives them that which is their due, as sitting in *Moses* chaire; that is, that the people should observe what they taught from *Moses*; here he takes order they should not have too much authority, they might be helpers to, not masters of their faith. Not that we are to make no difference of men learned

1.

εαββι.
Id est,
διδασκα-
λος,
πατήρ,
καθηγητής

ned and unlearned, far be that from us; give due respect unto the learned and the ancient, doe not soon reject what such shall say; if they goe crosse to our opinions, let it be a strong inducement to examine, and to search into the matter further: too apt wee are to dote upon our owne conceptions; but make them not the ground or bottom of your faith; No, if many learned mē agree upō a thing, yet receive it neither to your practice nor beliefe, because they say 'tis so, untill your selves are able to discerne it; use counsellors as *Counsellors and as helps*, use them not as *Law-givers* to your faith: or otherwise, if that were the way that God would have us take, to pin our faith upon our *teachers*, then he that is misled must be excused, no (sayes our Saviour) *if the blind leade the blind, both shall fall into the ditch*. Nay it would follow that the Lord hath given to us in vaine, our reason and abilities to judge; the Apostle sayes, *the spirituall man judgeth all things*, 1 Cor. 2. 15. againe *you have an unction from the holy one and ye know all things*, 1 Joh. 2. 20, 27. *Though we* (saith the Apostle, Gal. 1. 8.) *that is, the Apostles of Christ or an Angell from Heaven preach any other Gospell unto you, then that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed*: how should they know what is preach't, or whether it's another Gospell, if they try it not? and if they ought to try it, ought they not to judge it also? Yea, the Apostle sayes, the Preacher shall be judg'd accursed: nor doth it belong to *Ministers* alone, the Apostle speakes it to the *Churches of Galatia*, and to all beleevers; as also that command is universall, 1 Joh. 4. 1. *Beleeve not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God. And 2 Thes. 5. 8 Prove all things, hold fast that which is good.*
 God hath cause to be offended with you, if you
 faile

faile in this, this very thing hath done to him a world of injury already; it is the *pillar* upon which the Popish religion stands; take away that which they call the *authority of their Church*, let men allow themselves the use of *reason*, and not be compel'd to see with other mens eyes, and not their own, it will be like to *Sampsons* removall of the pillar, which brought down the house upon the *Philistins*; the whole structure of that *Romish Babel* will fall at once. Besides, when things are taken upon *trust* from man, suppose you hit upon the right, yet you appeare not for it as the truth of God, but as the opinion of such and such a man, for that is all that you can say, that you know such learned men doe say 'tis his, but whether it be so or no, you cannot (of your own knowledge) say. In case you suffer for the *truth*, thus taken upon *trust*, it is not, *formally*, for God or for his glory, that you give your testimony, 'tis only for the credit and the honour of those men, on whose *authority* and *credit* your faith is pinn'd, therefore be exhorted, as you would keep in with God in doing of his work, take heed of this; we condemn it in the Papists, let us not fall into't our selves. I have bin something large in this, because it is of such importance, the other two I shall but name and so conclude.

Jud 16.
29.

2. Take heed how you abate him any thing, to save your self; saving is loosing in this case, you loose what you think to save and loose him too: when God shall bring you to an *bower* wherein by your estates, or by your persons, you may stand him in some stead, say not so much, father spare me from this *bower*, spare me in this crosse, dispence with me in that, and let me step it over, I'll take up the next, say as our Saviour did, *for this cause came I to this bower*, to these abilities, to such a fitnessse, to this opportunity, that I might be his instrument to doe his worke, to advance his Gos-

Ioh 12.
27, 28.

Joh. 12.
27, 18.

pell, the throne of Christ, the glory of his Name; say, *Father*, glorifie thy Name, thy Power in supporting, thy Mercy in forgiving, thy Wisdome in contriving all things for the best, and let that suffice, that such a God he is whom you serve, so good, so wise, so powerfull, so faithfull to his people.

Hest. 4. 14

3. Doe not the work of God negligently, or to halves; it will provoke and grieve the Lord exceedingly; and little comfort shall you have in what ye doe, or have already done. *Cursed is he that doth the work of God negligently*, Jer. 48. 10. I speake not this to accuse, but to warne you of a rock where many have, and we are very apt to split and suffer shipwrack of that peace and comfort we desire; for let me tell you, God will have his work done; as *Mordecai* once said to *Hester*, so I may say, should you be backward, deliverance will arise some other way, and that may cost you deare: You know what once was said of *Caleb*, Num. 14. 24. *My servant Caleb* (sayes God) *because he had an other spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land, and his seed shall possesse it*; accordingly we find, he had a double portion given him, Josh. 14. This had he, whenas the people that neglected God and followed him to halves, were all cut short and came not into *Canaan*; would you have a *Calebs portion* in the comforts and the blessings which we hope for: then do as *Caleb* did; follow the Lord your God fully. God hath not in the least neglected you, how oft, how many wayes hath he delivered you, what great things hath he done for you, and for the Kingdome? I conclude all with that exhortation of the Apostle, 1 Cor. 15. 8. *Be ye stedfast, unmoveable, alwayes abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as you know that your labour shall not be in vaine in the Lord.*

FINIS.